THE UNIVERSAL EXTENSION OF MESSIAH'S KINGDOM.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED IN THE

NORTH CHURCH, NEW-HAVEN, CON. SEPT. 12, 1822,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING.

BY ALEXANDER PROUDFIT, D. D.

Men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.—*Psalm* lxxii, 17.

BOSTON:
CROCKER & BREWSTER, NO. 50, CORNHILL.
1822.

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SERMON.

MALACHI i, 11.

For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the gentiles.

It is the ordinary arrangement of Jehovah to accomplish his purposes by the instrumentality of secondary causes; it is also his usual arrangement to accomplish these purposes by slow degrees. Rarely does any object in the physical, or intellectual, or spiritual world, reach the full perfection of its nature without the lapse of considerable time. The natural seed, the particle of wheat, or of corn, does not attain to maturity immediately after being deposited in the earth, but is making gradual progress for days, and weeks, and months. It presents to the eye first *the blade*, then *the ear*, as an earnest in due season of *the full corn in the ear.* The intellectual principle in man, like the members of his body, ordinarily attains its utmost vigour through a long continued progress. As much cultivation is requisite, much time must also elapse, before his powers evolve, and the faculties of the infant arrive at the perfect maturity of manhood. The full-orbed day does not burst upon the world

with the earliest perceptible dawn of the morning. A few solitary rays of light first appear, afterwards a brighter radiance becomes visible, and these in due season are succeeded by the full splendours of noon. The Creator of the world did not execute his great work of creation in an instant, or an hour. That vast edifice, which he could have completed in a moment, with as much facility as in an age, he was carrying on, by successive steps, for several days: And it is worthy of notice that, in his ordinary dispensations, the more interesting and magnificent the scheme, which a sovereign God designs to accomplish, the more slow is the progress, by which he advances it to its final consummation. What a long succession of ages, for instance, intervened between the disclosure of the promise in paradise relative to Messiah, and its actual completion in his birth, and sufferings, and death, and resurrection. Such has eminently been the divine procedure, with respect to the diffusion of the Gospel among the nations of the earth. Nearly six thousand years have revolved, since the standard of Jesus the Saviour was erected, and the foundation of his spiritual kingdom commenced, in our world; and yet how comparatively limited is the sphere, over which it has extended; how often has its progress been impeded, and, to human appearance, its very existence endangered. But amidst all the intrigue of false friends, and the opposition of the unmasked enemies of the cross, this kingdom is gradually enlarging its boundaries: It shall ultimately become co-extensive with the limits of the earth, and comprehend, as its voluntary subjects, all the nations of men;—"for," saith the Lord

God, "from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the gentiles."

The imagery employed by the inspired prophet, is sublime and interesting beyond conception. We paint in our imaginations the sun, the Prince of day, rising in the east, advancing irresistibly in the path prescribed for him, and visiting, in his majestic march, the remotest boundaries of the earth; so shall that Gospel, which brings to *light immortality and life*, diffuse its radiance over all the kindreds of mankind; it shall, like the natural sun, its illustrious emblem, illumine and gladden, in its career, the inhabitants of every region under heaven. There is another truth probably suggested by the prophet, that as the spiritual light, like the natural, shall be universally diffused, so the course of the one shall correspond to the course of the other.

It is no novel remark that the progress of the Gospel, this great moral luminary, has been usually toward the west. In the east, the first ray of hope beamed upon our world, in the annunciation of a Saviour; and since that period, the knowledge of his salvation has been gradually spreading to the west, in the increase and dispersion of the human family. In the east the true light again burst forth in the call of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and afterward extended towards the west, in the journeyings of Isaac, and Jacob, and their numerous offspring. And it is comparatively but a few years since the light of life shone upon this western hemisphere, in the migration of our venerable ancestors from England, and Scotland, and Holland, and other countries of Europe.

Without making any formal division of this subject, I would respectfully invite your attention to the import of the *name* of Jehovah; to the assurances afforded us that this *name* shall become great over the whole earth; and to the principal means, by which the knowledge of the divine name will probably be propagated among the nations.

Names, in their usual acceptation, are terms of distinction. By the application of these, man is distinguished from man. The name of God may, therefore, with propriety be considered as comprehending every thing, by which he is made known; every outward, visible display, by which his being, and perfections, and glory, are brought more clearly to the view of his rational creatures.

This material world which we occupy, is his *name;* it affords an obvious and luminous exhibition of the existence and attributes of its Creator. What wisdom, what munificence, what might, what majesty shine forth in all his works; in their measureless immensity, and almost infinite variety. What various forms and properties characterize matter merely inanimate; and what various propensities and capacities appear in all that is animated or rational. What difference of dimension between the little atom, which floats almost invisible in the air, and that sun, which marches majestic in the heavens, enlightening and enlivening the whole system. How immensely different is the physical strength of the insect, which moves unseen upon the earth, and that of the ox or the elephant; and how far inferior are the intellectual capacities of some of the human family, who still rank in the order of rational beings, to those of the seraph

or cherub, whose residence is near to the throne of Jehovah, and from whom is reflected no inconsiderable semblance of his perfections and glory. If we admire the artist, who executes upon canvass the likeness of another, when the original form is exhibited immediately before him; or the architect, who rears an edifice, when the materials from which it is framed, and the implements with which it is constructed, are furnished to his hand; what must be our conceptions of the perfections of that Being, who originally gave existence to matter, and at a single word could create this world, with the infinite variety and magnificence of its furniture. *The heavens declare the glory of God*, reflecting upon the eye of every intelligent beholder, his wisdom, and power, and immensity; *and the firmament showeth forth his hand work. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard;* they have carried conviction into the bosom of the most rude, illiterate inhabitant of our globe, that there is a God. The human mind, after losing just apprehensions of the divine Being, has regarded these luminaries of heaven as divinities, and offered homage to them as such. Some nations have worshipped the sun, others the moon, and others the stars, as their deities.

The regular revolutions of the seasons, and the extraordinary phenomena of nature which occasionally appear, may also be considered as the *name* of Jehovah; they are constant and impressive displays of his perfections and glory. The sun rising in the east, morning after morning, imparting in his course light and joy to every thing that hath being; the genial showers of spring, which descend softening the earth and reanimating the vegetable world after the decay

of winter; the lightning, which cleaves, in an instant, the loftiest cedar; or the hurricane, whose proud march prostrates with resistless force every intervening object: "these in their turn are but the varied God;" they are ever new exhibitions of his goodness, and omnipotence, and grandeur. While he contemplates these vicissitudes of the seasons, the royal poet kindles into rapture and exclaims, *Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth forth knowledge;* and viewing the more awful visitations of the Almighty, in the occurrences of providence, he adds, *The voice of the Lord is full of majesty, the God of glory thundereth, the voice of the Lord shaketh the cedars, yea, the Lord shaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The Lord sitteth upon the floods, yea, the Lord sitteth king forever.*

But there is another interposition of Jehovah, in which his name is inscribed in characters still more legible, and from which his glory is reflected with a lustre more visible and commanding; the redemption of our world through the degradation and death of his own Son. This is the *name*, to which the prophet more immediately alludes in the passage before us. This dispensation of God is in Scripture emphatically called his *name*, his *way*, the *mystery of his will*, the *riches* of his glory, the *depth of the riches*—both of his *wisdom* and *power*, because in it there is a manifestation not merely of one perfection, but of all his perfections, collectively, which he has been pleased to afford in no other interposition. His wisdom, in the constitution of Messiah's person, by whom this redemption was accomplished, bringing into a union the most intimate natures essentially and infinitely different; his sovereignty, in the restoration of man, while

sinning angels were passed by; in selecting this earth, although degraded by sin, as the theatre on which the wonders of his love should be exhibited, rather than any other part of his immeasurable empire; in restoring a portion of the human family, while they were all equally involved in rebellion against their rightful prince; in restoring this portion not merely to the friendship, but also to the most intimate fellowship of their offended Sovereign; in advancing them to immunities more exalted than man had enjoyed in his primitive state, or even angels participate, who remained loyal to the Eternal King; in bringing the favoured objects of redemption to the possession of all these privileges in perfect consistence with the honours of his government, and without the possibility of future forfeiture; in effecting this recovery by the death of another in their room, by the death even of the Prince of life, *the Lord of glory*, his own co-equal, co-eternal Son; these are manifestations of wisdom, and condescension, and sovereignty, which surpass, in importance and majesty, all other manifestations; they are mysteries, which will be forever unfolding, but never fully unfolded; the dimensions of which plan, the capacities of no created being, whether man, or angel, or archangel, are able to comprehend. *These things the angels desire to look into*, and after they have pursued their researches through the lapse of ten thousand ages, they will ever be constrained to exclaim, How inconsiderable a part of its *breadth*, or *length*, or *depth*, or *height*, can be conceived! The results of this scheme now appear interesting, and through eternity will remain interesting, beyond the comprehension of our limited understandings. The very earth on

which we reside, as the scene where sin was expiated by the obedience and blood of the Prince of life, appears hallowed, and consecrated, and raised to the highest conceivable importance. Towards it the eyes of all rational spectators, who throng the immense empire of God, are eagerly directed; and on this they gaze with delightful astonishment, as the theatre on which the *Lord of glory* veiled, in the frailties of manhood, the uncreated glories of his Godhead: where, *travelling in the greatness of his strength*, he encountered and *spoiled principalities and powers*, liberating from their usurped dominion, man, their insulted and degraded captive; where, dying, he rose a conquerer, and established a kingdom broad, in its foundations, as the inhabited globe, and lasting, in its duration, as eternity. This earth, although inconsiderable in its dimensions, compared with other planets and worlds, is probably frequented more by intelligences from different parts of the divine dominions, than any other spot in the universe. Here *principalities and powers in heavenly places* frequently resort, and *learn, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God.* And perhaps it is not unwarrantably bold or presumptuous to conjecture, that this earth, on which sin was expiated by the sacrifice of the Son of God, after being purified by fire at the consummation of time, will be selected as the theatre where the glories of the Godhead will eternally shed their brightest radiance to the admiration of all holy Beings throughout the universe, and where the favoured objects of divine mercy will be admitted to the clearest vision, and most intimate fruition, of their Father and God.

This is the *name* of Jehovah which *shall become great from the rising to the setting of the sun:* the dispensation of his mercy, which is to be made known to all the families of the earth; to be revealed for the eternal glory and happiness of all who acquiesce in it, and the endless perplexity and horror of those, who either reject or neglect it.

But what assurances have we, that *this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world?* This was proposed as the second subject of inquiry, and on this part of our discourse it is altogether unnecessary to enlarge. The universal extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, is taught by all the imagery under which it is represented in the Old Testament and the New. It is compared to a *little leaven*, which leaveneth the *whole* lump; to a *grain of mustard seed*, which, although the least of all seeds, *becometh a tree, so that the fowls of the air lodge in the branches thereof;* to a *stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which shall fill the whole earth*, and *stand forever.* All this variety of emblem expresses the same elevating truth; it instructs us that the Gospel shall yet be propagated through the whole earth; that its sound shall spread to the south, and to the west, and to the north, and to the east, until all the nations have seen its glory, and felt its regenerating and healing influence.

The same interesting truth is obvious from all the characters, by which the Redeemer is set forth in the oracles of truth. He is denominated the *Saviour of the world; the desire of all nations; a propitiation for the sins of the whole world; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be for salvation to the ends of the earth;* and the event of his nativity was pronounced by the

heavenly messenger to be *tidings of great joy to* ALL *people.* These and similar expressions do not imply, that *all* of every nation, or of any nation, shall participate in the blessings of his salvation; but they do imply, that all kindreds of mankind shall hear the sound of his Gospel, and that some of every kindred shall believe in him and be saved by him. The standard of Messiah's cross shall yet wave triumphant in every region of the earth, and some of every tribe of the human kind shall flock to it, and rally around it, and exult in it, as their shield, and consolation, and glory.

This charter to the nations indiscriminately, as his inheritance, which had been given to the Saviour from eternity, he recognized in his appeal to his Father shortly before *his decease at Jerusalem. Thou hast given him power over all flesh;* thou hast delegated to him the exclusive administration of this lower world, that *he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him;* that he might gather in, by the ministry of his Gospel, those of every nation formerly made over to him as the reward of his humiliation and toil. Thus at the commencement of the present dispensation, which was to be the last and most liberal and luminous dispensation of mercy to mankind, he unfolds this charter, and gives command and commission to his apostles to enter immediately upon its execution; *go ye into all the world;* "be circumscribed in your travels no longer by the little region of Palestine, but consider the circumference of the earth as the only boundaries of my kingdom, and consequently the only limit of your labours, and in going into all the world" *preach the gospel to every creature;* tell the nations that all distinction is now done away; that the partition

wall, which had stood for ages between the Jew and Gentile, is cloven in twain *from the top to the bottom;* and that the saved of all countries shall hereafter constitute *one* flock, under me their Shepherd; *one* family, under me their Father; *one* soldiery, under me their Captain and Prince.

But how are the nations to be evangelized? How shall the idolatry of the pagan, and the delusions of the false prophet, and the superstition of the papal power be abolished; and their blinded votaries be brought submissive before the cross of the Saviour of the world?

This is the last subject of inquiry, and the answer is as obvious, as the interrogatory is interesting. All this mighty conquest must be obtained, through the co-operating agency of the Lord the Spirit, by *means;* by *means* of the word, either read, or preached. The kingdom of Messiah was never extended, nor its trophies multiplied, by miracle. The administration of his covenant is wholly an administration of *means. Of his own will he begets the individual by the word of truth,* and of his own will shall the nations be converted through the instrumentality of the same *word of truth, the same Gospel of salvation.* And, therefore, before the *name* of Jesus—Jehovah can become great, from the *rising of the sun unto the going down of the same,* the Scriptures must be translated into every language, and circulated through every land. It therefore cannot pass unnóticed that, in all ages, when any important work was to be accomplished in favour of Zion, correspondent provisions were made preparatory to such a work. Means answerable to the magni-

tude of the end were furnished; and, while the divine agency was visible, the necessity of diligence on the part of the church was not in the least degree superseded. Previous to the enlargement of the spiritual kingdom, at the death and ascension of our Lord, the learning of the Greeks, by the subjugation of that power, was transferred into the hands of the Romans; the language of the former became the court language of the latter; and thus the Greek language, through the controlling influence of Rome, was adopted at the courts of the surrounding nations. About the same period, the Old Testament scriptures were translated by the Seventy into the Grecian language; the New Testament scriptures were written originally in the same language; and thus, through the agency of *Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*, the sacred canon became accessible to the learned of different countries, and preparation was made *for teaching all nations.* How visibly did the Lord God again interpose for preparing the way for the enlargement of his church, at the commencement of the memorable Reformation! About that time, the virtue of the magnetic needle was discovered; the science of navigation was improved; the various arts were cultivated to a degree of perfection formerly unknown; different oceans were explored; other islands were found; and especially this continent, which we occupy, was discovered; and thus an Asylum was provided for the true church from the corruptions and persecutions of the old world. About the same time, the art of printing was invented; copies of the sacred Scriptures were multiplied; their price was suddenly reduced; and thus the Bible, circulated through

different countries, and read by persons in all conditions of life, became a mighty engine for extending the boundaries of Zion. The incorruptible seed, scattered around by the distribution of the word of life, took root, sprung up, and presented a liberal harvest to the glory of sovereign grace.

But there is another and still more powerful means, by which the Gospel is to be diffused among the nations:—the preaching of the word of reconciliation. The Scriptures, translated and distributed, will probably remain a dead letter, unless accompanied with the ministrations of the living teacher. Far be it from me to detract from the importance of Bible Societies, or to utter a remark, which might tend to relax the exertions of those who are engaged in the honorable work of diffusing the Scriptures. Let associations of this character be formed; let copies of the sacred volume be multiplied; let them be dispersed through every country; let them be conveyed into every house, and placed on the shelf of every habitation of mankind. Let all this be done with a zeal answerable to the unutterable importance of the work; yet I venture to assert, that it is by the *preaching* of men, enlightened, ardent, self-denied, disinterested men; by the *preaching* of such in a pre-eminent degree, that the nations are ultimately to be subdued to the obedience of faith. Without the evangelical, laborious pastor, how are the people to be collected from sabbath to sabbath; how are the Scriptures to be expounded and enforced; how are the denunciations of the law to be brought home to the conscience for conviction, or the consolations of the promises to be conveyed to the despondent heart; how are the

seals of the covenant, these badges of Christian character, and these mediums of Christian comfort and support, to be dispensed; in short, without the living ministry, how is the visible church to be organized, or its privileges perpetuated, on the earth? This challenge is confidently made, because it is founded on the Bible itself, and confirmed by the general history of Zion. *It hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* Again, *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Nay, so important, so indispensable is the ministry of reconciliation to the advancement of the Saviour's kingdom on the earth, that the Apostle asks, as he looks abroad on the benighted nations, *How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?* There is much instruction in the following declaration of our Lord, *This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations;* that is, shall be propagated by *preaching*, and the New Testament prophet, in foreseeing and foretelling the glory of the millennial day, also foresaw and foretold the *preaching* of the cross, as the great means, by which this glory should be ushered upon the world. *I saw*, he asserts, *I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.*

These declarations of Scripture, are illustrated and supported by the history of the church in all past ages. Did we ever see the Gospel making any considerable progress beyond the sphere actually occupied by the preacher of righteousness? Or, to vary

the expression, did we ever see men, in any considerable numbers, *reconciled unto God*, where the ambassador of Jesus did not appear to propose the overtures of reconciliation? On the other hand, have we seen religion languish to any alarming degree, in its power, or form, where an able, evangelical, laborious ministry was enjoyed? How suddenly have the interests of godliness revived in an age, or city, or village, upon the establishment of a *man full of the Holy Ghost and of faith;* and how suddenly has its glory withered, and even its form vanished, under the incumbrance of a man erroneous in principle, immoral in practice, or indolent and unfaithful in the discharge of the duties of his trust, who intruded himself under the mask of a minister of Christ! Israel, during the former dispensation, did not degenerate to any affecting degree, while their priests and the prophets combined their influence in stemming the torrent; while these messengers of the Lord of Hosts, regardless of popular flattery or frown, dared to *lift up their voices like a trumpet*, exposing the iniquities which abounded; but how soon did the contagion become universal, when these, as rotten carcases, rolled along with the stream of corruption! At the introduction of the Christian economy, the labours of Apostles, and the limits of the Church, were nearly co-extensive; the triumphs of the cross were usually multiplied only where the *soldier of Jesus* extended his march, and, with *the armour of God*, made his invasion upon the empire of darkness. *The disciples went forth*, says the sacred historian, *and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.* The importance of the living min-

istry for the success of Christianity, is no less obvious from the history of the Reformation. A Wickliff in England, a Zuinglius in Germany, a Jerome in Prague, were instrumental, by their instructions and examples, in the partial illumination of the regions, where they respectively arose; and humanly speaking it wanted only the increase and succession of such lights, to have dissipated that sullen darkness, which had so long enveloped the world; but in their age, or in the following ages, where was there a reformation in religion, without the exertions of some adventurous, zealous reformer? and I am fully persuaded, that all our success in attempting to evangelize the heathen will depend, under God, on the number, the ability, the prudence, and patience, and perseverance, of our missionaries. As a friend to the prosperity of my Master's cause, and to the souls of those unnumbered millions, who are perishing *without vision*, I long to see a host of *scribes well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom*, coming forward to be employed as Evangelists,—men who are humble, and holy; mortified to themselves; mortified also to the world, in its gain, and gratifications, and glory; who are ready to endure any difficulty, to encounter any danger, and to resist any temptation, which *the flesh*, or *the devil*, or *the world*, may offer for the purpose of alluring or appalling them; men to whom the honour of Jesus, and the salvation of fellow immortals, are dearer, beyond comparison, than *houses*, or *lands*, or *father*, or *mother*, or *sisters*, or *brethren;* men who need not be sought after by missionary societies, but, fired by a zeal too ardent to be repressed, or extinguished, like apostles offer themselves spontaneously to the work.

Are there none such in this large, and highly cultivated, and Christian assembly? Is there not one, are there not ten, are there not twenty generous youth, willing to offer in sacrifice every secular interest on the altar of love to the Saviour, and in compassion to miserable pagans; and to go forth as the *first fruits* of this Board, to some region hitherto unexplored by the spiritual pioneer? Look for a moment, beloved youth, ye who were early devoted to Jesus in baptism, whose intellectual powers have been improved by the advantages of education, and on whom the Holy Ghost has savingly descended, regenerating, and expanding, and purifying; look abroad, and behold the countless multitudes of fellow mortals and immortals, who have never seen a Bible; who have never entered the peaceful sanctuary; who have never heard of the redemption of the cross; whose consciences are often cloven with a sense of guilt, but know nothing of that crimson laver, which speaks pardon and peace; who are stripped of that robe of innocence, which once adorned the nature of man, but remain ignorant of that garment of salvation, which the friend of sinners has provided; who have forfeited by the disobedience of the *first Adam*, their title to the inheritance of heaven, but have never enjoyed the offer of an unalienable title to a nobler inheritance, through the obedience and blood of the *second Adam, the Lord from heaven.* What! is there *bread to spare* in the spiritual family, and shall these our brethren be permitted, through our neglect, to perish with hunger? *Is there balm in Gilead*, is there a remedy provided in the Gospel, and shall we suffer them to languish and die an eternal prey to the disease of sin! Is there

liberty proclaimed through the merit of the Saviour's sacrifice, *liberty for the lawful captive*, and must they, through our apathy or indolence, be doomed to the torturing of *everlasting chains!* I appeal to you, generous youth, while you contemplate this spectacle of degradation and wo, does not the kindly emotion of sympathy begin to swell your bosoms, and the tear of compassion burst involuntarily from your eyes? Actuated by the same spirit are you not ready to exclaim, each for himself, with the seraphic Isaiah, Lord Jesus, *Here am I, send me. I will endure all things, that those*, who have hitherto *lived without God in the world, may obtain salvation through thy name.*

Do your hearts beat high with ardour to step forward in this sacred, most benevolent enterprize? We would willingly cherish the rising *flame*, and promise you the *right hand of fellowship;* we will assign you a rank in the Christian camp far superior to our own, and acknowledge you entitled to brighter honours in the heavenly world; we will pledge ourselves to afford you a liberal support with our secular substance; we will give you our parting benediction, and soften this benediction with our tears; while, in going to your place of destination, you explore the desert, or roll on the billows of the deep, we will commend you in our meditations to that Redeeming angel, whom the winds and the waves obey; after you have reached the missionary station, and begin to tell the roving savage *that the Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world;* that *he is no respecter* of persons, but *in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him;* we will accompany your instructions with our prayers; every convert to the

faith of the Gospel, which is made through the instrumentality of your exertions, *we will hail as your future glory and joy;* and should our days of labour on earth be numbered before yours, we hope to *receive you with open arms into everlasting habitations.*

Although I have passed what may be considered the meridian of human life, yet I can freely repeat an assertion, made nearly twenty-six years since, on a similar occasion, that if the *Captain of the Lord's hosts* were not apparently calling me to remain in the station which I now occupy, I should be eager to appear among the first in pressing to that standard, which is now waving for an accession of soldiers; I should deem it a glory to march foremost for taking possession of some new missionary station under the auspices of this Board, and the pavilion of the *Angel* of the covenant.

Is such our assurance, that this *Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world*, and are such the means of its diffusion? No arguments can be necessary for urging us to persevere, with an augmenting ardour, in hastening on this grand consummation. The path of duty is both obvious and unobstructed. We have the command of the living God, as our authority; we have the promise of his perpetual presence and support, as our encouragement; we have the contract between the co-equal Father and Son, ratified in *the counsels of peace, that all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him*, as our security for success; and we have the prospect of a crown incorruptible, and a seat with our Master upon his throne, as the prize suspended at the end of our course. Let all therefore aim at arousing their own souls to a nobler

activity in this cause, which must be pronounced the most honourable and interesting, to which the energies of the man, or of the Christian, can be directed. Let them become more fervent in that supplication, which was uttered nearly three thousand years since, and has been repeated by the friends of Zion in every intervening age, *may thy way, O God, be known upon earth, and thy saving health among all nations.* Let them be more cheerful in the consecration of their temporal treasures for the execution of every scheme, which has for its object the glory of Jesus in the wider spread of the radiance of his Gospel; let each appear more importunate, expostulating with others to throw their prayers and their property into the common fund. Let the sacred flame be thus communicated from heart to heart, and from house to house, and from country to country, until the redeemed of all kindreds, and colours, and climes, become *of one heart and of one soul* in diffusing the knowledge of him, who is the *desire of all nations.* To us who constitute the members of this Board, the voice of the Lord God of gods is awfully imperative and impressive, to *work while it is day.* To all the admonitions of his word, He is giving loud and repeated admonitions in his Providence, "to do with our might whatever we design to do for the conversion of the heathen." How many seats in our little circle have been vacated, within the lapse of a few years; and what a large proportion of our beloved and revered associates are gone! In vain, at the recurrence of our annual meeting, do we look around these walls for a Spring, a Payson, a Dwight, a Huntington, an Appleton, or a Worcester; we are no longer enlivened by their countenances, nor

enlightened and animated by their counsels and prayers. Their bodies now rest in the grave from the labours of life, and their immortal spirits have taken their flight to the invisible world, we trust to the regions of everlasting day; and could they speak down to us this evening from their high seats in the climes of bliss, they would urge us with united voices to *abound* more uniformly *in the work of the Lord;* they would probably tell us, that it is the reproach of the Christian church, that Jesus, *the heir of all things*, has yet received only a small part of his mediatorial right; that, owing to the lethargy of his followers, a very inconsiderable section of the earth can be considered as his inheritance, and a small proportion of its immense population is his in actual possession; they would tell us that Jews, and also Mahometans, and heathen, are going down in multitudes from hour to hour, to the abodes of eternal death, and that our period of exertion for their salvation must soon cease forever; they would probably intreat us not to be disheartened by all the toil or disappointment, which we experience in the labours of life; that the vision of the countenance of the lovely Saviour for a *single* moment in the light of celestial glory, would overbalance all the trials of this world; that there is no language of man or Angel, that can describe the thousandth part of his love or loveliness, or express the delights of that *river* of *life*, which rolls everlastingly at his right hand!

The signs of the times are still becoming more auspicious, and the prospect brightens, as we advance from year to year, that the earth will ere long *be full of the knowledge of Jehovah.* Probably there never was

a moment when such a combination of events occurred to elevate the hearts of the righteous, and encourage them to persevere in their efforts for extending the Redeemer's kingdom. While prophecies, luminous and innumerable, assure us, that *from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, his name shall be great*, every movement of his Providence inspires a hope, that the period for their completion is at hand. Denominations of Christians, which had long stood aloof from each other, are now uniting their counsels and prayers and treasures for the advancement of the same general cause. Every art is now improved; every science is cultivated with more than ordinary attention and success: and it is a consideration, which renders this fact more favourable to the prosperity of Zion, that the arts, and the sciences thus improved, are consecrated to the best interests of man; to the elevation of his intellectual and moral character in this world, and for promoting his eternal honour and happiness in the next; nations, for ages hostile to each other, are now living in perfect harmony and peace. The intimate intercourse, which is maintained between the inhabitants of different and distant countries, is opening a thousand avenues for the distribution of that Gospel, which proclaims *good will to men;* and, as the path on the ocean is at present unobstructed, an opportunity is afforded for wafting the missionaries of the cross to the shores of every country. Modes of education are introduced, by which labour is lessened to the teacher, and knowledge may be acquired with greater facility, on the part of the scholar. By the institution of Sabbath schools in almost every part of the religious world, multitudes, formerly enveloped in igno-

rance, or plunged in the lowest vices, are both instructed and reclaimed; and thus many, who would probably have been diffusing around them the contagion of moral disease and death, are now rendered ornaments to the church; and in the relation of parents, or masters, or ministers, or magistrates, may become instrumental in propagating religion and learning to succeeding generations. These may be considered signs in our time, that *the mountain of the Lord's house, is shortly to be established on the top of the mountains, and to be exalted above the hills, and that all nations shall flow unto it.* All this stupendous and complicated machinery, which has been matured with so much wisdom, and has been rolling on from year to year with an accelerating motion, cannot be suddenly arrested. The zeal of the Lord of hosts for the accomplishment of his eternal designs, hath commenced the work, and the same zeal will perform it. From every Tract Society, from every Moral Society, from every Missionary Society, from every Bible Society, from every Sabbath School Society, from every Society instituted for the education of meritorious youth for the Ministry, some rays are emitted, which, concentrating, will constitute the morning of that day of glory, which has been so often predicted and promised from the foundation of the world: And great, ineffably and eternally great, will be their honours, who are most active in ushering it in. Near to confessors, and reformers, and prophets, and apostles, will be their seat with the Mediator upon his throne, and bright will be those crowns which thay shall receive, in the kingdom of their Father.

O fellow Christians, what joy inexpressible does it inspire, to look abroad not merely over this hemisphere, but over the world, and anticipate that moral change, which shall hereafter be effected! When we see every continent, and every isle, which has been marked by the foot of man, hallowed by the pure worship of our God; when we see the olive branch of peace blossoming where the purple banner had been formerly unfurled; and the harsh thunder of war succeeded by the soft acclamations of praise; when we see every settlement adorned with a sanctuary, and each sanctuary thronged with peaceful worshippers listening with rapture to that message, which the ears of the shepherds caught on the plains of Bethlehem; when we see every dwelling of man converted into a temple for the living God, with an altar erected, and the incense of devotion ascending in clouds as a grateful memorial to the mercy seat; when we see a copy of the sacred Scriptures in the possession of every family, read with understanding by the parents, and repeated with ecstacies of joy by their *babes and sucklings;* when we see the obstinate and long infatuated Jew, the ruthless Siberian, the shivering Icelander, the sullen Hindoo, the sottish Hottentot, and the roving inhabitant of our western woods, all reduced to habits of social and Christian order, loving God, loving each other, basking under the mild beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and exulting in the prospect of that glory which shall be revealed. Yes, fellow worshippers, every obstacle, which lies in the way of the conversion of the nations, shall recede; every valley shall rise, every mountain shall sink, the *crooked places shall be made strait, the rough places shall be made plain.*

until the messenger of peace has trodden the remotest limits of the earth, and has announced to the millions, who are scattered over its extended surface, that *unto them a Saviour is born, even Christ Jesus the Lord.* And when this mighty, magnificent work shall be accomplished; when the voice shall re-echo "from mountain top to mountain top," until it has reached the *boundaries of the everlasting* hills, that *the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth;* more especially, amidst the glories of the Judgment day, *when the trump of the Archangel shall sound,* and the nations of the redeemed shall assemble *from the four winds of heaven,* how must it swell our anthem of praise to recollect, that we had been employed even as humble instruments in promoting these interesting results! With what transports of joy, probably with mutual congratulations, we shall recollect the scenes of this evening, when, from different sections of country, and bearing different names as Christians, we convened in this temple to deliberate on the concerns of our Master's kingdom.

Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus; come quickly, and let the whole earth be filled with thy glory.